2: Bowers E-5 (1930-1931)1950 NQ17 Mandan NQ17

received goods in abundance from people of the village, particularly persons of his children's clan.

Since the Mandan lived in a territory of uncertain rainfall, the crops were frequently endangered by drought. There were formal rainmaking ceremonies, but these frequently failed to bring rain. A man would frequently announce that he was fasting on a certain day to bring the rains. If rains came before the fasting began, he received credit for them and was paid generously for his services. When the rains had not come on the day when fasting was to begin, he would go to some designated spot to fast, singing his holy songs while watching the sky for the approaching clouds, which he would endeavor to direct toward the gardens. Anyone could fast to bring rains to the gardens or buffaloes near the village, but in general these extra rites were performed by persons lacking formal tribal bundles and were people who felt that they had not received proper recognition for their successes in warfare, horse-stealing, or in finding the buffalo herds. They had little to lose; failing to bring buffaloes or rain, they were thought none the less of for their failure and were praised if they succeeded.

There was a certain amount of fasting when bad luck persisted. When on eagle-trapping expeditions, some men would catch eagles while others did not. One who had been especially lucky would volunteer the use of his pit to one who had failed to catch birds. If the latter's bad luck persisted, he would fast and even have thongs inserted through his skin for dragging buffalo skulls.

There was a certain degree of specialization of males in a Mandan village. Those who had acquired an aptitude of finding the buffalo herds were relied upon for their good judgment in supervising the summer buffalo-hunting expeditions. Even those who eventually attained the status of leader were expected to attain that position by degrees. He was first taken out as scout to assist in locating the herds and later as leader of the hunters when he was expected to perform simple rites immediately before the attack was made on the herd. He would pray to the buffaloes not to send the party bad luck, and, when the surround had been made, he would make an offering of sage and feathers from the speckled eagle to the buffaloes by tying

2: Bowers E-5 (1930-1931)1950 NQ17 Mandan NQ17

the offerings to the horns of some weathered buffalo skull found conveniently near by. If a horse fell into a washout, stepped into a badger hole and injured its rider, or was gored by a buffalo, the leader was said to have "kicked the stone" and was usually never selected again unless he fasted sufficiently to receive the forgiveness of the aggrieved parties.

As leader of the hunters, he was expected to make successful surrounds without losing his men from accident. Having been successful on many surrounds, it was believed that he was lucky and had sacred objects that were protecting him and his party. He was then eligible to become the leader of a future summer buffalo-hunting party.

A man's responsibilities increased greatly as the leader of the summer buffalo-hunting party. His selection was made in council held a month before the village was to leave for the summer hunt. The principal men of the village met to consider the matter of a leader. Crows Heart claimed that all who had been lucky in warfare or in leading the hunters aspired to be the summer buffalo-hunt leader at least once in their lifetime. The leader was selected from those who had buffalo skulls as a part of their sacred bundles. These skulls became a part of bundles either through purchase of a hereditary bundle or, more rarely, were introduced into a bundle when vision instructed. It was necessary to have unanimous consent of the head men to become leader, and the appointment was for only one expedition away from the village. A change was usually made for subsequent hunts on the former leader's recommendation, as it was believed that one would have bad luck if he led too many hunts. When a selection had been made, the crier for the Black Mouth Society[1] went through the village announcing the decision.

The leader consulted the village chief in matters relative to preparation of the equipment and the leaders of war parties relative to the protection of the party which would comprise the entire population except a few feeble people who preferred to visit in a neighboring village while the party was away. The women first weeded and hilled their garden crops while the men prepared the dog and horse equipment. While preparations for the summer hunt were being completed, scouts were sent

[1] [The men's society intrusted with the organization and protection of the village. See pp. 94-95, Cat. 116.—Analyst]

4: Lowie E-5 (1910-1911) 1913
NQ17 Mandan NQ17
Hidatsa NQ14

MH 575 1 MH 575 561

In Calf-woman's day[1] the number of Mandan and of Hidatsa women in the society was about equal. The performances ceased, under Government pressure, when she was about fourteen years of age.

Hides-and-eats, who had served as rear officer, added a number of details. It was necessary to join in the wintertime because that was the season of the dance. The person who called for the performance of the great ceremony must have dreamt to that effect and was expected to prepare a great deal of food for the society. If, during the dance, a member went outside from necessity and a young man pulled her blanket, she was obliged [788] to say, "A wolf has bitten me." If she failed to say this, she was in danger of actually being bitten by a wolf. The members were middle-aged, while the two women with skunkskin head bands were elderly. Hides-and-eats set the number of singers at four; their age was immaterial, but as a matter of fact they were about fifty or sixty. They were not identical with the musicians of other women's societies.

MH 575 527 [788]

Buffalo-bird-woman says that the White Buffalo women were in the habit of going round the village in the morning, passing every lodge. One member would enter a clan daughter's lodge, and say to her, "So-and-so's daughter, give me light" (that is, fire). The clan daughter sometimes answered, and sometimes remained silent. Once the informant's aunt addressed her as stated above, and she replied, "Yes, I will do so." This signified her willingness to provide a feast. The next day, accordingly, she brought large quantities of food, invited all the White Buffalo women to her lodge, and entertained them. Further, she gave the society a new gun as a present, and a piece of calico to be smoked with incense. The incense-burner, who also had the privilege of taking off all the members' robes and hanging them up, took charcoal, made incense, seized the head of the rear officer's robe, shook it, proceeded to the middle officer's,[2] and repeated the same performance, as she finally did with the leader also. She made incense as she passed along the circle of members. Then the [535] dance began. All wore their crowns of white buffalo skin on this occasion. When the singers commenced to sing, the leader and the rear officer rose and danced forward, crossing each other's path. They returned to their places, and repeated the performance at the next two songs. At the fourth song, the middle officer also rose, and all three danced, facing alternately the fireplace and the door, and finally returning to their places. At the following song everyone rose and danced. After the dance was over, the little girl approached the rear officer with a corn-ball, and put a little of the corn

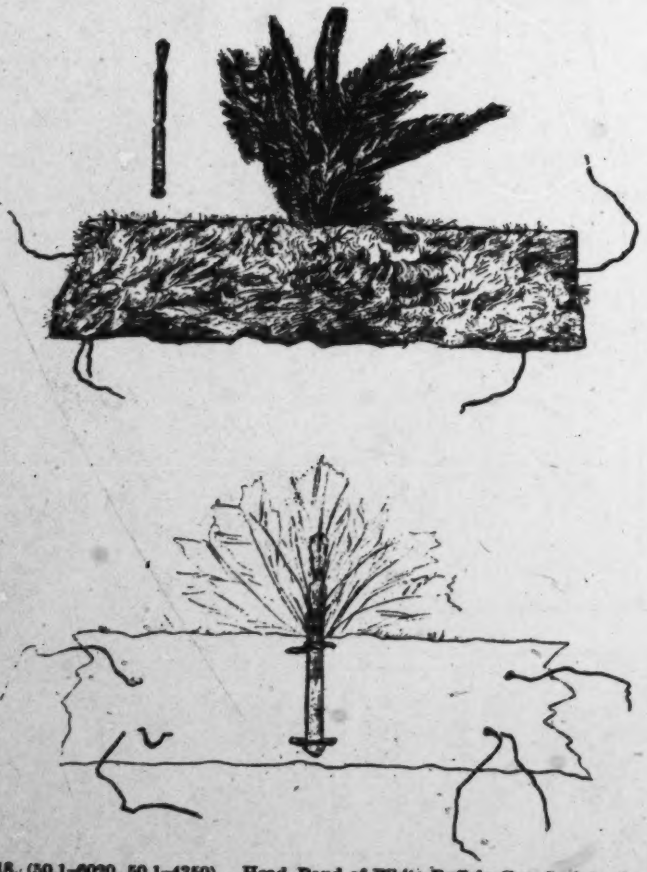
[1] This informant is about 56 years old (1910).

[2] This informant, like Hides-and-eats, speaks of but one little girl in the society.

4: Lowie E-5 (1910-1911) 1913
NQ17 Mandan NQ17
Hidatsa NQ14

M H 575 527

on the nose of the rear officer's skin robe. She did the same with the leader's robe, then she walked back to her place and went through the same performance with her own robe. This procedure which was regarded as an offering to the robes was called *ō'xkipati*. It was repeated three times. At the last song the incense-burner went to the rear officer, and untied her



M H [292]

Fig. 18. (50.1–6020, 50.1–4350). Head Band of White Buffalo Cow Society, front and back view. Length, 62 cm.

robe, causing it to drop to the ground. She proceeded to the middle officer, and thence to the leader, untying all the robes. This dropping of the robes symbolized the shedding of the buffaloes' hair.

[788]

Apparently anyone interested in the success of the buffalo chase might

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7: Catlin R, E-5 (1832-1840) 1857
NQ17 Mandan NQ17

outer surface until after the Deluge. When an Indian story is told, it is like all other gifts, "to be taken for what it is worth," and for any seeming inconsistency in their traditions there is no remedy; for as far as I have tried to reconcile them by reasoning with, or questioning them, I have been entirely defeated; and more than that, have generally incurred their distrust and ill-will. One of the Mandan doctors told me very gravely a few days since, that the earth was a large tortoise, that it carried the dirt on its back—that a tribe of people, who are now dead, and whose faces were white, used to dig down very deep in this ground to catch *badgers*; and that one day they stuck a knife through the tortoise-shell, and it sunk down so that the water ran over its back, and drowned all but one man. And on the next day while I was painting his portrait, he told me there were *four tortoises*,—one in the North—one in the East—one in the South, and one in the West; that each one of these rained ten days, and the water covered over the earth. 773

These ignorant and conflicting accounts, and both from the same man, give as good a demonstration, perhaps, of what I have above mentioned, as to the inefficiency of Indian traditions as anything I could at present mention. They might, perhaps, have been in this instance however the creeds of different sects, or of different priests amongst them, who often advance diametrically opposite theories and traditions relative to history and mythology.

And however ignorant and ridiculous they may seem, they are yet worthy of a little further consideration, as relating to a number of curious circumstances connected with the unaccountable religious ceremonies which I have just described

The Mandan chiefs and doctors, in all their feasts, where the pipe is lit and about to be passed around, deliberately propitiate the good-will and favour of the Great Spirit, by extending the stem of the pipe *upwards* before they smoke it themselves; and also as deliberately and as strictly offering the stem to the four *cardinal points* in succession, and then drawing a whiff through it, passing it around amongst the group. 782 788

The *annual religious ceremony* invariably lasts *four* days, and the other following circumstances attending these strange forms, and seeming to have some allusion to the *four* cardinal points, or the "four tortoises," seem to me to be worthy of further notice. *Four* men are selected by Nu-mohk-muck-a-nah (as I have before said), to cleanse out and prepare the medicine-lodge for the occasion—one he calls from the *north* part of the village—one from the *east*—one from the *south*, and one from the *west*. The *four* sacks of water, in form of large tortoises, resting on the floor of the lodge and before described, would seem to be typical of the same thing; and also the *four* buffalo, and the *four* human skulls resting on the floor of the same lodge—the *four* couples of dancers in the "bull-dance," as before described; and also the *four* intervening dancers in the same dance, and also described. 796 801